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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
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RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0090

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 000896

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FOR WHA/CEN AND WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/22/2017
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [HO](#)
SUBJECT: HONDURAS' RESPONSE FOR COUNTRY REVIEW FOR TITLE
III SUSPENSION OF LIBERTAD ACT FOR CUBA

REF: A. STATE 65523

[1](#)B. TEGUCIGALPA 415

Classified By: AMB. CHARLES FORD. REASONS 1.4(d)

[1](#)1. (U) In response to reftel A, Post's answers regarding the relationship between Honduras and Cuba follow. Post's answers track the numbered questions in reftel A.

[1](#)2. (U) There are no known Honduran companies that have invested in Cuba, nor are there any bilateral trade agreements between the two countries.

[1](#)3. (U) Honduras and Cuba entered into an agreement in 1999 that allows Cuban medical brigades to operate in Honduras and allocates a number of scholarships for Honduran students to study at the Escuela Latinoamericano de Medicina (ELAM) in Havana, Cuba. There are approximately 280 Cuban medical professionals currently in Honduras, almost all in the rural and poor areas. Over 700 Honduran medical students have either studied or are currently studying at ELAM under the 1999 Agreement. In January, Cuba offered another 70 medical scholarships to Honduran students, the majority of which were distributed to poorer students, including a third to orphans, from the outlying departments. Cuba also has 18 teachers working in a literacy program and has offered to send another 260 if the Government of Honduras (GOH) requests them.

[1](#)4. (C) The GOH has not worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba. Honduras has consistently voted in favor of the United Nations' resolutions to end the U.S. embargo against Cuba. The administration of President Zelaya has taken a stance of avowed neutrality regarding the Cuban government, failing to condemn human rights abuses or offering support for democratic change in Cuba, yet not publicly supporting the Castro government. They have eagerly accepted Cuban doctors and teachers while sending Honduran students to study in Cuba. The Honduran ambassador to Cuba, Juan Ramon Elivr, was selected partially for his sympathy for Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution (see reftel B).

[1](#)5. (U) Although Honduras and Cuba restored relations in December 2002 following a forty-year break, Honduras did not engage Cuba diplomatically until Honduran Foreign Minister Milton Jimenez visited Cuba in late December 2006. During that visit, Minister Jimenez entered into an agreement of cooperation with the Cuban government in the areas of education, health and sports, and the two governments began discussions regarding the settling of their shared maritime boundary. Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque reciprocated with a two-day visit to Honduras on February 8 - March 1. The new Cuban Ambassador close to the Foreign Minister arrived shortly thereafter.

¶6. (C) COMMENT. Although President Zelaya is not ideologically inclined to Cuba's communist regime, many members of his ruling Liberal Party are, such as Liberal Party President Patty Rodas. The left wing of the Liberal Party, led by Rodas, seeks a stronger relationship with Cuba and will not publicly disparage Cuba's human rights record or support a change in Cuban government. The Liberal Party "old guard" is still romantically enchanted with the myth that the Cuban revolution was a popular uprising of the poor against a U.S.-supported dictatorship. President Zelaya tends more towards pragmatism, accepting aid offered by Cuba, but steering clear of any involvement in internal Cuban issues.
END COMMENT.
FORD